



San Diego City Attorney Michael J. Aguirre

NEWS RELEASE

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CONSUMER ALERT CUTE PUPPIES MAY BE SICK PUPPIES

SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE CONVICTS ILLEGAL SELLER OF PUPPIES

San Diego, CA: The City Attorney's Office convicted a woman who was selling puppies sick with the Parvovirus, a deadly canine virus that often infects young puppies, to consumers in store parking lots across San Diego. On February 23, 2005, Margarita Diaz pleaded guilty to animal neglect charges and failure to register for a sellers permit. The prosecution came as result of numerous consumer complaints and a vigorous joint investigation by the San Diego Humane Society and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

"This was an important prosecution – it reminds consumers how vital it is to acquire pets from reputable sources in order to avoid tragic results," said City Attorney Michael Aguirre.

The case was prosecuted by the City Attorney's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit in the Criminal Division. One of the victims who bought a puppy from Diaz was a young boy who saved up \$160 to buy a small Bichon Frise-Poodle mix. The puppy ended up dying in the arms of the boy from the Parvovirus within days. Before the puppy died, the boy even went as far as to seek donations for veterinary bills for his puppy. Prosecuting Deputy City Attorney, Joan McNamara, warns consumers "not to rely on the documents given to you by an unknown seller. In this case Ms. Diaz gave purchasers fake medical records for the puppies from Tijuana. It is important to purchase pets through reputable sellers."

"This was a very important case," said Humane Society Agent Mike Griffin. "The San Diego Humane Society and SPCA are taking the selling of sick animals to unsuspecting animal-lovers very seriously. Those looking to add an animal companion to their family should consider getting an animal from an animal welfare, animal services, or rescue group before buying a puppy from someone on the street. These groups are dedicated to finding animals quality homes and making sure that the animals are medically and behaviorally sound before

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they go home with their adopters. In addition, animal welfare agencies, animal services, and rescue groups charge reasonable adoption fees, which generally include an animal's spay or neuter, vaccinations, and microchip identification."

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